

Ternstroemia corneri (Theaceae)

by

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In preparing a systematic account of the Malayan Theaceae for volume 3 of the *Tree Flora of Malaya*, I came across an obviously undescribed species of *Ternstroemia* from southern Johore. It is represented by several specimens collected by Professor E. J. H. Corner and others, all deposited at the Herbarium of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore, of which one (*Corner SFN 27840*) was sent to Kew as early as 1935 for identification and returned with an annotation sheet stating that it was "Not matched in Kew", signed by Mr. Fisher in 1936. Its large, obovate or oblanceolate leaves and ellipsoid fruits with a pointed apex are so characteristic that it can be readily differentiated from other large-fruited *Ternstroemia* species of Malaya and indeed those of the rest of the Malaysian region. The new species, dedicated to Professor Corner, is described below.

Ternstroemia corneri H. Keng, sp. nov.

Arbor 12–20 metralis, ramulis teretibus. Folia coriacea, anguste obovata vel oblanceolata, 20–28 cm longa, 7–8.5 cm lata, apice rotundata vel mucronata, basi longa attenuata, margine integerrima, nervis 13–15 paribus; petiolis circa 1 cm longis, incrassatis. Flores solitarii, proxime positi, pedicellis 2–2.5 cm longis, bracteolis 2, suboppositis, lineo-lanceolatis, 5 mm longis, sepala 5–6, obovato-rotundata, 5–6 mm longa, petala 5–6, oblongo-obovata, 8–10 mm longa; stamina numerosa (circa 80), 5–7 mm longa, ovarium conicum, 2–4 mm longum, 2-loculare, loculis 2 plusve ovulatis. Fructus ellipsoideus vel anguste ellipsoideus, 4.5–5 cm longus et 2–2.5 cm diametro, seminibus 2–4.

Small to medium-sized tree, 12–20 m tall. Bark greyish, no stilt roots or buttresses. Branches and branchlets terete. Leaves 3–4 in a false whorl, coriaceous or thin coriaceous, narrowly obovate or oblanceolate, 20–28 × 7–8.5 cm; lateral veins 13–15 pairs; apex rounded or abruptly and bluntly mucronate; base long-attenuate; petiole 1 cm long, stout. Flowers solitary, in axils of fallen leaves, 2–2.5 cm across if fully expanded, peduncles 2–2.5 (–3) cm long; bracteoles 2, subopposite, a short distance below the calyx; sepals 5–6, obovate-rounded, 5–6 mm long; petals 5–6, oblong-obovate, 8–10 mm long; stamens about 80, in 3–4 series, the connective produced and pointed; ovary conical, 2–4 mm long, 2-loculate, with 2 ovules per locule, the style 2-forked. Fruit baccate, ovoid or narrowly ovoid, 4.5–5 cm long, 2–2.5 cm in diameter, seeds 2–4, ellipsoid, flattened.

Known only from southern Johore, Peninsular Malaysia, in lowland swamp forests.

Specimens examined: Johore, Sungei Berassau, Mawai-Jemuluang Road, *Corner SFN 28740* (Type) (in swamp forest), 6 February 1935; Sungei Sedili, *Corner* s.n. in March 1932 (a tree, up to 50 feet); Mawai, *Corner SFN 30888* (60 feet, leathery leaves, yellowish green beneath); Sungei Kayu, *Kiah SFN 32158*; Sungei Kayu, Mawai-Jemuluang Road, *Corner SFN 32245*; Mawai, *Nagadiman SFN 34736*; Sungei Gambut, *Corner SFN 36815* [all SING!].

A simple dichotomous key to the four Peninsular Malaysian *Ternstroemia* species with larger flowers (over 1.5 cm across) and larger fruit (over 2 cm long) follows:

1. Normal leaves over 20 cm long; mature fruit distinctly ellipsoid and attenuate toward both ends, over 4.5 cm long *T. corneri* H. Keng
1. Normal leaves less than 15 cm long; mature fruit rounded or ovoid, less than 3.5 cm long
 2. Flower (and fruit) stalk slender, 3.5–4 cm long; leaves elliptic obovate, 12–18 × 6–8 cm *T. penangiana* Choisy
 2. Flower (and fruit) stalk stout, 1–1.5 (–2) cm long,
 3. Bracteoles immediately below and clasping the calyx; mature fruit ovoid-rounded, 3–3.5 × 2.5–3 cm; leaves elliptic to narrowly elliptic, 8–11 × 2.5–5.5 cm *T. bancana* Miq.
 3. Bracteoles a short distance away and free from the calyx; mature fruit rounded, 2.5–2.75 cm across; leaves narrowly elliptic, 12–16 × 3.5–5 cm *T. wallichiana* Engler

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Facing plate: *Ternstroemia corneri* H. Keng

A branch with unfolded flowers (type, *Corner SFN 28740*). Upper inset: fruits cut into halves showing the seeds (*Ngadiman SFN 34736*); lower inset: dissected flowers (type). All scales in cm.